

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY OES/OFA:BSHALLMAN:MJB

APPROVED BY OES/OFA - ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY

ARA/CAR - MR. YOHN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NASSAU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 232168

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, BF

SUBJECT: SPINY LOBSTER

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM RIDGWAY

1. AT REQUEST OF HOUSE MARITIME AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE, I ATTENDED MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 25 TO DISCUSS RECENT SPINY LOBSTER NEGOTIATIONS. PRESENT AT MEETING WERE CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN, REP. LEGGETT, A NUMBER OF FLORIDA CONGRESSMEN INCLUDING MESSRS. PEPPER AND FASCELL, REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERESTED FEDERAL AGENCIES, PLUS HARMON SHIELDS AND BOB JONES.

2. FLORIDA CONTINGENT PRESENTED FULL DETAILS ON PRESENT ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF UNEMPLOYED FISHERMEN AND ASKED COMMITTEE MEMBERS ASSISTANCE IN ATTEMPTING EITHER REOPEN ISSUE WITH GCOB, OR EXPEDITE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYED FISHERMEN, OR BOTH. AT REQUEST OF REP. LEGGETT, I REVIEWED HISTORY OF ISSUE AND PROVIDED BACKGROUND (FULLY CONFIDENTIAL

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KNOWN TO SHIELDS AND JONES, OF COURSE) AND U.S. EFFORTS

DURING NEGOTIATIONS. TONE OF MEETING THROUGHOUT WAS CONSTRUCTIVE AND MODERATE, WITH LEGGETT MAKING SPECIAL EFFORT TO COUNSEL AGAINST ACTIONS WHICH WOULD FURTHER COMPLICATE SITUATION.

3. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING MRS. SULLIVAN ASKED FOR COMMENTS ON COURSES OF ACTION OPEN NOW TO U.S. PROS AND CONS OF VARIOUS OPTIONS (OFFERING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PACKAGE, USING WHATEVER LEVERAGE IS AVAILABLE, ETC.) WERE DISCUSSED BUT ONLY DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES WERE WILLING TO CONCLUDE THAT EVERYTHING THAT COULD BE DONE HAD BEEN DONE. MRS. SULLIVAN THEN INDICATED THAT COMMITTEE WOULD CONSIDER MAKING APPEAL TO PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE THAT U.S. SEEK TO REOPEN MATTER WITH THE GCOB AT HIGHEST LEVELS, BELIEVING AS DID MOST OF THE OTHERS PRESENT THAT THE "LEVEL" OF THE U.S. DELEGATION MIGHT HAVE LED GCOB TO CONCLUDE THAT ISSUE WAS NOT IMPORTANT TO U.S. SHE AGREED TO MY SUGGESTION THAT BEFORE CONSIDERING SUCH ACTION, IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE COMMITTEE TO HAVE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR INDUCING THE GCOB TO RECONSIDER THE LOBSTER ISSUE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THOSE PROSPECTS, IF ANY, WOULD BE ENHANCED BY A HIGHER LEVEL REPRESENTATION. TO THIS END I UNDERTOOK TO SEEK YOUR VIEWS AND CONSULT FURTHER WITH MRS. SULLIVAN AND THE COMMITTEE STAFF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. IN CONSIDERING THIS MATTER YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT THE VARIOUS RESTRAINTS ON OFFERING SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HAVE ALREADY BEEN FULLY EXPLAINED TO THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS. IT WOULD HELP ME PARTICULARLY TO KNOW FIRST IF THERE ARE ANY INDICATIONS WHATEVER THAT THE GCOB IS RECONSIDERING THE POSITION IT TOOK AT THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND SECOND WHETHER IN YOUR OPINION NEW AND VERY HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIONS MIGHT BRING ABOUT GCOB RECONSIDERATION (GIVEN THE CONTINUING RESTRAINTS ON PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE). IN REGARD TO THE FIRST POINT, REP. LEGGETT MENTIONED IN THE MEETING THAT HE DISCUSSED THE ISSUE WITH AMBASSADOR JOHNSON THE PREVIOUS DAY AND HAD RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GCOB MIGHT

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BE OPEN TO FURTHER SUGGESTIONS ON THE LOBSTER ISSUE. IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR ME TO PROVIDE CLARIFICATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON THIS POINT WITHOUT OF COURSE SUGGESTING THAT JOHNSON'S INFLUENCE IN THIS MATTER PROBABLY IS MINIMAL.

5. FINAL POINT IN CONNECTION WITH SEPTEMBER 25 MEETING IS THAT COMMITTEE MEMBERS AGREED TO ISSUE PRESS STATEMENT

SAYING MERELY THAT COMMITTEE MET INFORMALLY TO DISCUSS
SPINY LOBSTER PROBLEM WITHOUT MAKING REFERENCE TO ANY
SPECIFIC LINES OF POSSIBLE ACTION. IF YOU ARE QUERIED
ON THIS, SUGGEST YOU STATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT MEET-
ING WAS HELD TO GIVE APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE
INFORMAL OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR POINTS OF VIEW OF INTERESTED

PARTIES IN FLORIDA.

6. I DID NOT USE ANY OF WHAT I KNOW ABOUT FACILITIES
NEGOTIATIONS AS INDICATION OF WHAT GCOB ATTITUDES ARE
LIKELY TO BE AND WILL NOT UNLESS YOU THINK IT WOULD BE
CONSTRUCTIVE. INGERSOLL

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